

Women's and Gender Studies News

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A Year in Ukraine Thus Far

Susan Dodenhoff/ Сьюзен Доденхофф
WGS Major, 2012

As I look back on the year that has progressed since I arrived in the former Soviet Union country of Ukraine, I am struck by how my life has been changed by the many experiences I've had and the interesting people I've met. I decided to become a Peace Corps volunteer in 2009 after becoming inspired by a video depicting the hardships faced by many impoverished Cambodian children. Regardless, the Peace Corps sends its volunteers to the places where their qualifications and skills are most needed. Needless to say, I am very satisfied with my placement in the town of Smila (which means "brave girl" in Ukrainian), Ukraine. I have worked as a TEFL (Teaching English as a Foreign Language) volunteer in a specialized language school. I have also invested my time in other work including gender empowerment, multicultural awareness, leadership training, and HIV/AIDS education.

Ukraine is a country going through enormous change, as you may know if you have watched the news lately. Since it became an independent nation in 1992, the Eastern European country has struggled to overcome economic turmoil and establish its own national identity. Nevertheless, people remain optimistic and fiercely patriotic; I've observed countless blue and yellow flags waving throughout the country. As it is a relatively young country with roots placed firmly in the grounds of tradition, there is much work to be done in terms of gender relations, multiculturalism, and HIV/AIDS.

In Ukraine and many other countries in Eastern Europe, women and men are expected to follow strict gender roles that to me as an American, seem to reflect what 1950's America looked like. If I am with my male Ukrainian friends, I will be outright denied the chance to pay for anything at a café or restaurant or allowed to hold any sort of bag that is not a purse. These are small examples of the lighter side of how women are regarded. Women face issues with limited career advancement, sexual harassment and discrimination, domestic violence, and human trafficking (Bureau of Democracy, 2007). In order to help alleviate these problems, the Peace Corps offers opportunities to participate in various working groups which organize and implement projects designed to educate and change the way the culture regards women and their rights. As a member of GAD (Gender and Development Council) I've participated in and directed camps and seminars that address issues of gender violence, discrimination, and stereotypes. I am also the co-chair of the LGBT subcommittee which works to support volunteers facing potential homophobia and navigating a strictly heteronormative culture.



Since I began working as a teacher, I've grown to love interacting with children and young adults. It's interesting to see how similar they are in their behavior and thinking to American youth. I regularly see students playing Angry Birds on their smartphones and discussing the latest episode of the Vampire Diaries in between classes. Despite the fact that both countries are thousands of miles away from each other, one can observe a distinct resemblance between the two cultures. This realization came as a surprise, since I came here believing that Ukrainian culture would be absolutely foreign and different from my own. As a way to spread some American school culture to Ukrainian schools, I have organized a student-led club that centers around volunteerism, leadership, and civic engagement. Participants have been involved in collecting toys and clothes for impoverished children and our latest project focused on World AIDS Day (December 1st), in which they designed a poster with a positive HIV/AIDS theme and distributed informational pamphlets that educate readers regarding the facts, statistics, myths, and discrimination related to the disease. Volunteerism is a relatively foreign concept to Ukrainians, which shows the need for average citizens to see effective projects being implemented in their very own town. Having students instead of teachers choose, design, organize, and implement their own undertakings teaches them responsibility and leadership skills.

I have observed and experienced the culture, scenery, and people of this country for a year and continue to be pleasantly surprised almost every day. The country itself is beautiful and rich with history that can be seen in the architecture of the huge Eastern Orthodox churches and monuments. The people themselves are very friendly and accommodating, as good hospitality is seen as an important part of the culture. I am almost always welcomed with a great meal and copious amounts of tea whenever I visit a friend. After initially struggling with the difficult language (I can now claim to know basic Russian) and culture shock, I've managed to make friends and settle into Smila. My town as accepted me as one of their own and I truly feel as though Ukraine has become my second home.

WGS Faculty & Affiliate Accomplishments

Professor Kristen Abatsis McHenry presented her article “Facebook and Feminism” on the Integrating Technology into the Classroom Workshop at The American Political Science Association Teaching and Learning Conference, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania in February 2014. Her article discusses the use of Facebook in the classroom and the Who Needs Feminism project here at Umass Dartmouth.

Professor Anupama Arora, English, has an article, “This is a Civilized Nation, and a Man from the East has no Right to Criticize it: Indian Visitors at the 1893 Columbian Exposition” which has been accepted for publication in the journal, *Journeys: The International Journal of Travel and Travel Writing*.

Professor Maureen P. Hall, STEM Education and Teacher Development, has been busy with some collaborative interdisciplinary research. The current linchpin of Hall’s scholarship involves using contemplative and reflective practice(s) to deepen learning. She is the lead author of “Integrated Learning in a *Science of Kriyayoga* Course,” which appears in the February 2014 issue of *Dev Sanskriti Interdisciplinary International Journal* (DSIIJ). Hall collaborated with Bal Ram Singh (Chemistry), Aminda O’Hare (Psychology), and Evan Ames (one of O’Hare’s graduate students) on this project. Hall has also co-written a chapter, “Greater Satisfaction from the Labor: Creative Writing as a Text Response Strategy in the Teacher Education Classroom,” which will appear in *Creative Writing and Education* (forthcoming 2014, Multilingual Matters Publishing) edited by Graeme Harper (Honors College, Oakland University). This publication involves work with teacher educator Toby Emert, who teaches at Agnes Scott College, a women’s college in Georgia. In late March 2014, Hall will present her most recent research at the 7th Annual Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) Commons Conference in Savannah, Georgia. This research is a collaborative and ongoing project with Aminda O’Hare entitled, “Neural and Classroom Learning Assessments of Cognitive Improvements Following Training in Contemplative Practices.” This project investigates the impact of an 8-week mindfulness meditation training program on developing educators’ cognitive and emotional control. This project is currently being expanded to include training in the Common Core Deep Reading skill, part of the new teaching standards for K-12 education. This literacy

work also builds on Hall’s work with Robert Waxler in the English Department and their co-authored text, *Transforming Literacy* (Waxler & Hall, 2011). O’Hare and Hall have submitted a proposal to the Obama-Singh Initiative to expand this research by collaborating with DSVV University in India. Also, in late May 2014, Hall will travel to Chicago for the Chicago International Conference on Education to present her research on reflective practice(s) with practicum students at UMD. In collaboration with Marilyn Asselin in Nursing, Hall is training the current practicum students (student teachers in area schools) in Kim’s (1999) Critical Reflective Inquiry Model from the nursing profession. This study being conducted by Hall and Asselin investigates best practices and habits of mind for professional educators in terms of increasing teachers’ understanding of reflection and reflective practice in education, both in terms of how these practices can deepen student learning and also enhance the teaching self. Hall is also serving as an OFD faculty fellow this year. Her project called “Making Strides in Teaching and Learning” involves leading a group of faculty focusing on differentiated instruction, which aims to help faculty respond to the learning needs of more students.

Dr. Juli Parker and the Center for Women, Gender & Sexuality, have received a \$300,000 Dept. of Justice’s Office for Violence Against Women Grant. The grant will enhance victim services for victim/survivors of dating violence, domestic violence, stalking and sexual assault. It will also institutionalize a three part mandatory sexual violence training for all incoming students. This is the fourth time the Center has applied for this grant. They will be hiring a Victim/Advocate Educator who will run trainings and will serve as the university’s primary victim support. Susan Krumholz, WGS Affiliate and Chairperson of the Crime & Justice Studies Department serves on the campus coordinated response team working on the grant.

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WGS Student News



Hanna Stengl, a Women's and Gender Studies major, is pleased to announce that her WGS senior capstone paper has been accepted at the 21st Southern Connecticut State University Women's Studies Conference on April 11th and 12th. Her paper, "Miley Cyrus and Celebrity Culture's

Influence on Young Women" argues that media is a very influential factor in women's lives and the things celebrities do or say impact women to act or think the same way celebrities do. Stengl measures the influence of celebrity media culture, specifically young Hollywood celebrities' effect on women, using a quantitative survey, conducted at the University of Massachusetts Dartmouth. She argues that it is important to understand the way college-age women interpret celebrity culture and whether it shapes their attitudes and behaviors. Her findings reveal that media and specifically celebrity culture is a very influential factor in women's lives and contributes to body image issues. She argues that celebrity culture glamorizes the idea that being rich, skinny, and popular are the main characteristics that a woman should have to be successful in the world. Stengl implemented the research design she proposed in the Feminist Research Methods course taught by Dr. Kristen Abatsis McHenry in the Fall of 2013, went through the IRB process and has worked with Dr. Jen Riley to analyze her survey results. In addition to presenting her research at the conference, Stengl is the recipient of a travel and research grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research.



Tiffany Tavares, a double major in Women's and Gender Studies and Psychology, is pleased to announce that her WGS senior capstone paper has been accepted at the 21st Southern Connecticut State University Women's Studies Conference on April 11th and 12th. Her paper, "Hurting Women: Constructions of Body Image in the Media" argues

that negative images of women in magazines directly affect women's self-esteem, self-worth, and level of injurious behavior. Using feminist semi-structured qualitative interviews, Tavares finds that the media influences women's development and ideals of beauty. The media perpetuates a negative understanding of women's bodies and encourages women to create a lens through which they believe they must view themselves. Tavares argues that women often resort to drastic measures when they do not fit that ideal. Tavares argues that gender violence, bullying, self-injurious behavior, and other destructive behaviors are a direct result of objectified images of women in the media. Tavares adds to the feminist literature by arguing that dehumanizing images and media influence are correlated to women's perceptions that they do not meet up to the ideal beauty standards of contemporary American culture. Tavares implemented the research design she proposed in the Feminist Research Methods course taught by Dr. Kristen Abatsis McHenry in the Fall of 2013, went through the IRB process, and performed in-depth interviews. Tavares has worked with Dr. Jen Riley to analyze her interview data and connect to the feminist literature on body image for her capstone project. In addition to presenting her research at the conference, Tavares is the recipient of a travel and research grant from the Office of Undergraduate Research.

Chancellor's & Dean's Lists - Fall 2013

We would like to congratulate our WGS Majors and Minors who made the Chancellor's and Dean's Lists for Fall 2013.

Chancellor's List: Tricia Breton, WGS/ENL Major; Nat Tessicini, WGS Major, Melanie Reardon, WGS Minor

Dean's List: Evangeline Kuzmech, WGS Major; Britni Oliveira, WGS Major; Taylor Roque, WGS Major; Hanna Stengl, WGS Major; Tiffany Tavares, WGS Major; Lisa Graves, WGS Minor

WGS Online Courses Summer 2014

Summer Session 1 (June 3 – July 2)

WGS/ENL 200: Women Writing Place

Prof. S. Evans

Women writers have historically been seen in relationship to the domestic, or home, sphere. Contemporary women writers, however, have increasingly investigated women's relationship to the world around them—the places and spaces they occupy both within the home, and also as they enter into and travel the larger world. In this course we will examine the ways contemporary women writers from diverse cultural backgrounds have engaged in investigations into the production and programs of human space and the ways women in particular are conditioned to respond to particular spaces. The novels we will read this semester offer a variety of spaces—both public and private—in which their characters live their lives, and we will consider how characters conceive of themselves in relation to the places and space(s) around them.

WGS 300/CJS & AAS 339: Racism, Crime & Justice

Prof. V. Saleh-Hanna

In this course we will define and in great detail, assess the racist foundations upon which contemporary society constructs and institutes criminal justice. We will focus heavily on the evolution of historical forms of racist, punitive and violent confinement (slavery, apartheid, reservations and colonial wars) into contemporary systems of imprisonment and punishment. We will read Octavia Butler's *Kindred* and Toni Morrison's *Beloved* as slave narratives, as ideological frameworks that introduce you to the concept of hauntology – a sociological study of the ghosts that haunt contemporary life, the skeletons in this nation's closets. We will explore the literature that has dealt with this topic in reference to these novels as well as the literature that addresses the larger haunted settings of this land, its victims, oppressors and survivors.

WGS 300/PSC 303: Reproductive Rights and Health

Prof. H. Berggren

In this course, we use feminist approaches to study trends, laws, policies and politics relating both to women's control over their fertility and to reproductive health in the United States. The areas covered include abortion, birth control, sterilization, sex education, sexually-transmitted disease (STD) prevention, assisted reproductive technologies (ART) the birthing process, and infant-feeding

WGS 362/HST 389: Women in World History

Prof. C. Mehrtens

From a comparative historical perspective, this course surveys major world-history themes linked to gender and international exchange in Brazilian history. We will cover historical themes ranging from Western-Eurasian contact and colonial rule through 19th-century independence and integration into the world economy to the development of industry in the twentieth century into the globalization process in the twenty-first century. It also provides students with a critical understanding of this history by addressing issues linked to the formation of ethnic identities, the processes of social exclusion, and the experiences of ordinary women. Through the analysis of texts and images, students critically inquire into the literature and selected biographies to examine historical processes embedded in the modern representations of identity, gender, race, class, and urban space.

WGS Online Courses Summer 2014

Summer Session 1 (June 3 – July 2)

WGS 369: Global Women's Health & Activism

Prof. K. McHenry

An overview of women's health through an international perspective will be provided in this course. Various women's health issues such as cancer, fertility, maternal mortality, STI/STD, HIV/AIDS, and violence against women will be researched and analyzed. The investigation of health issues through a feminist political lens is crucial. The relevance and importance of understanding women's health through a human rights framework will be explored. The aim is to understand how gender inequity impacts women's health. Socioeconomic status, nation, gender, and race all play a crucial role in women's health. Most importantly, an investigation into the various political, institutional and activist responses to women's health issues around the world will be undertaken. The level of political commitment to women's health will be analyzed by focusing on key strategies implemented by international institutions like the United Nations, and look at particular government strategies in countries such as Haiti, India, China, and Ghana.

Summer Session 2 (July 8 – August 6)

WGS 300: Women in Bollywood

Prof. A. Arora

India has one of the largest film industries in the world, and this film industry has come to both reflect and shape Indian society and culture. In this course, we will examine how Bollywood or popular Hindi-language Indian cinema has portrayed Indian women over the decades since Indian Independence in 1947. In the process, we will explore how gender intersects with issues of tradition and modernity, caste, region, religion, nation, and migration in postcolonial India and its filmic texts.

WGS 352/PSC 390: Disposable Women

Prof. K. McHenry

Examination of women's status from a global perspective. Investigation of the national level laws, customs, and international human rights conventions that impact women's status and sometimes deny women their fundamental human rights. Overview of international human rights theory, women's status, and political advocacy. Investigation of violations of women's rights around the world, using a human rights framework and feminist theory to understand the ways women's experiences of human rights violations are gendered. Topics explored include human slavery and sex trafficking, female genital mutilation, female infanticide, sex selective abortion, and sexual violence.

WGS/SOC 336: Women and Social Policy

Prof. S. Krumholz

This course is designed to provide the student with a general understanding of social policy. We will look at some of the policy areas that have particular impact upon women. We will explore issues of gender differentiation and question why certain policy decisions are made. We will closely explore issues of family, family policy and the way in which such policies affect women's lives.

Who Needs Feminism

Danielle Lawrence

I had the pleasure of creating the first “Who Needs Feminism?” campaign at UMass Dartmouth. During the spring 2013 semester, Professor Kristen Abatsis McHenry and I had discussed the idea of bringing the campaign to our campus. “Who Needs Feminism?” is a Facebook campaign that has emerged from a Women’s Studies course at Duke University. I had started working on the Facebook group over the summer for Professor McHenry’s Women’s and Gender Studies 101 classes of the fall 2013 semester. We hoped that this project would teach students what feminism really is and why it is necessary.

I have always thought of feminism as the equality of gender in social, political and private life. Through the WNF campaign and WGS classes, I have learned that there is no single definition of feminism. Feminism means different things to different people. For some it might mean equality, and for others it’s the ability for a person to treat a woman with respect and dignity. Feminism resists being boxed into a single definition.

In her article, “Not by Degrees: Feminist Theory and Education”, Charlotte Bunch explains that “Theory enables us to see immediate needs in terms of long-range goals and an overall perspective on the world.” Theory is an outlook that helps you put things in perspective and gives direction on how to dismantle patriarch of the future. The model for theory is description, analysis, vision, and strategy. With this model of theory I have learned to describe what the problem is, analyze the significance of the problem, envision what I would like my future to look like, and figure out what I am going to do about the problem.

The vision behind “Who Needs Feminism?” is to show why feminism is needed. The strategy behind the campaign is to make people aware of the issues and start doing something about them. After reviewing the photos that were taken this past fall and spring by Professor McHenry’s Women’s and Gender Studies 101 classes I was impressed with all the student and faculty participation. One of the students doing the project, Matthew Cicero, stated that “Overall I feel this project is something I feel everyone should experience, because it opens up issues that most try to ignore.” Another WGS 101 student, Ryan Hennessey, explained that “some people were very reluctant to answer the question, both men and women alike”. When students were looking for volunteers to participate they received some backlash. A lot of men who were approached for the project didn’t want any part of it because they didn’t understand what is wrong with the way things are now. The idea of feminism isn’t something that is often explained to students in high school or anywhere for that matter. I believe that this is why many people reacted so negatively when



asked to participate, because they didn’t understand the true meaning of what feminism is. Rola Hassoun believes that “feminism is not discussed enough between students on this campus...or any campus. Most of the students whom we approached had a negative or apathetic reaction to the question ‘Why do you need feminism?’ One student even used the famous statement ‘I’m not a feminist but...’, indicating that they didn’t want to be associated with the cause. Regardless of initial negative reactions, the fact that many students found a way to relate feminism to themselves indicates that everyone needs feminism to an extent, they’ve just never thought about it.”

Students really got into the spirit of the project and have started to inspire dialogue as they post articles and news clips as examples of why feminism is needed on our Who Needs Feminism page on Facebook. The class has recently decided to open this Facebook page to the public. The outcome of this project was phenomenal, even though there were a few rough patches throughout. I am happy to see that the students found it an interesting, eye-opening experience.

WHO WE ARE

THE FIRST THE FINEST THE FUTURE



MSU Facts

Colors: Baby Blue and White

Mascot: The Amazon women who represents that we are:

**STRONG
FIERCE
and
INDEPENDENT**

Nickname: The Sophisticated MU's

THE FOUNDATION

Mu Sigma Upsilon Sorority Incorporated was founded November 21, 1981 at Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, as the first Multicultural Greek Letter Society. The founders were five sophisticated women determined to establish an organization that brought together all women. It was their limitless vision that enabled these determined women to break down the barriers and build the bridges that connected women from all different parts of the world. Hence, our motto "Mujeres Siempre Unidas" or "Women Always United."



This strong sisterhood embodies what it means to be strong, and sophisticated and embraces all nationalities regardless of race religion or creed. Today Mu Sigma Upsilon (MSU) has grown to a membership of over 950 women with recognized chapters reaching from Massachusetts all the way across to Texas and expanding rapidly.



Philanthropy

As sisters of Mu Sigma Upsilon, each and every one of us pledge to uphold our goals of Academic Excellence, Unity Amongst Women, and Community Service. Our mission has always been to help as many organizations as possible, but we also realize the need to focus our efforts in order to make a stronger impact on the community at large.

Our National Philanthropy for 2012-2014 is The Keep a Breast Foundation. The Keep A Breast Foundation is the leading youth focused, global, nonprofit breast cancer organization. The Keep A Breast Foundation provides supportive programs for young people impacted by cancer and educate people about prevention, early detection, and cancer-causing toxins in our everyday environment.



Official Interest Group

**Togetherness
Independence
Academics
Respect and
Achievement**

The T.I.A.R.A. Group is the official interest group of Mu Sigma Upsilon. Being an active T.I.A.R.A. allows interested women of MSU the opportunity to experience first-hand what it would be like to be a sister of Mu through planning, programming, fundraising and networking.

MSU was built on three main goals:

Academic Excellence

We all have the drive to succeed and to become successful individuals which begins within the classroom.

Unity Among All Women

The sisters of MSU come from various backgrounds and strive to empower and enrichen the lives of other women

To be active within the University and Community

Not only are we involved at our campuses, we also work to give back to our communities.

Prof. Kristen McHenry has agreed to serve as advisor for Mu Sigma Upsilon Sorority members.

Their focus of Women's Empowerment and Multiculturalism is a great addition to the organizations on this campus.

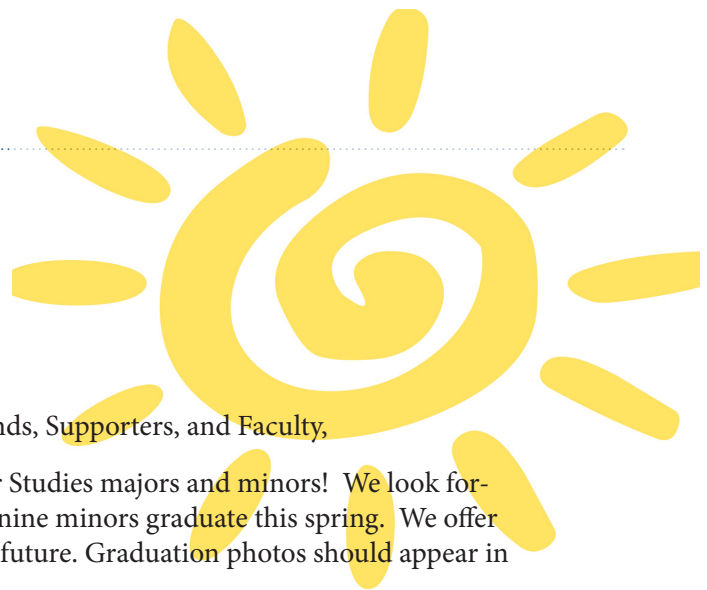
Please contact Prof. McHenry at kmchenry@umassd.edu for additional information.

Women's and Gender Studies

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Dear Women's and Gender Studies Students, Friends, Supporters, and Faculty,

We are very proud of all our Women's and Gender Studies majors and minors! We look forward to seeing five majors, one online major, and nine minors graduate this spring. We offer them congratulations and best wishes for a bright future. Graduation photos should appear in the Fall 2014 newsletter.

There is growing interest in our major and minor and a continuing need to bolster our ability to offer scholarships to students. We would be most grateful if friends, supporters, and faculty could make a commitment to the Women's Studies Scholarship Endowment. For further information, please contact one of us.

We thank you on behalf of our students,

Heidi Berggren and Stephanie O'Hara
Co-Chairs, Women's and Gender Studies

